

## Artists Create a Seasonally Haunting Exhibit

Written by Michael LoGuidice  
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Bruce Walters' *Two Crosses* reminds me of a walk in a New Orleans cemetery with the crypts above ground and the iron-grate doorways; it is a graphite painting that uses a dramatic portrayal of lights and darks to give the eerie feeling one would get while walking alone at night in a burial ground.

This image clearly fits with Bruce Walters' artist statement for his current exhibit with David Zahn at the MidCoast Fine Arts Gallery at the Mississippi Valley Welcome Center in LeClaire: "Because this exhibition fell during October, I brought together 13 of my works that best evoke a sense of Halloween – moonlit images of cemeteries, skeletons, strangers, jack-o-lanterns, and flying houses."

Walters has five digital prints, six graphite paintings, and two acrylic paintings in the show, while Zahn is exhibiting 15 ceramic sculptures and one bronze sculpture.

One of the things I like about Bruce Walters' digital prints is that they don't look like digital prints. The process recedes into the background as you enjoy the image; Walters is using the medium to advance his expression without letting the medium take over.

The most striking digital print in this show is *Dreaming's Edge*. It has an overall blue cast with the centerline of a highway crossing diagonally between shadowy homes. The work has a dreamlike quality, including that infuriating perception in which you think you can identify an element in your dream but its clear attributes elude you. A glance at this image identifies it as a cityscape, until you look closer, and then the jumble begins: The shadows are wrong and the lighting is coming from various angles, but there are no street lights and the clouds have rectangular edges.

David Zahn's sculptures are figurative with a twist. His artist's statement captures his aims: "Figure sculpture is an art form, which when done well is about much more than the person depicted. Communication of the state of mind and the physical body should be present. In addition to this, aesthetics are also an important element. If I create a sculpture that conveys the look of a person and nothing else, I know as an artwork, the piece has failed. ... I try to create

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sculptures that are aesthetically pleasing, emotionally thought-provoking, and interesting to look at.”

Zahn’s figurative work is mostly in busts at this point; the show does not demonstrate many full-figure sculptures. The artist will add geometric elements to the figure elements, to achieve a combination of organic curves and mathematical ones. The juxtaposition is interesting and sometimes striking. The placement of one of his works, *Inception*, near the balcony railing of the gallery allows the geometric shapes of the Welcome Center ceiling and flags to accent the shapes of the sculpture.

There is an Art Nouveau quality to Zahn’s work. He combines intricate scrollwork and Celtic-like interweaving-lattice-work around the busts he sculpts. Most of his pieces are untitled, so I won’t be describing them by name. But one of the works that exhibits this interweaving scrollwork is by the east gallery window near the guest-comment book, and it looks like an orangish pillar with the face of a man inscribed within it.

This show is a good exhibition from two local artists whose work is very professionally executed. It is not an extremely large show, but the works are uniformly completed to high standards of craftsmanship. Last weekend, the trees were starting to turn, and by this weekend the colors should be beautiful, providing a vibrant backdrop.

Some the works have bargain prices, and none carry unreasonable price tags for the quality of work you’d be getting. The prices range from \$120 for a small ceramic sculpture or \$125 for a digital print to \$4,800 for the bronze sculpture. There are several pieces priced at about or under \$200.